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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum

NIGERIA

[7 February 1996]

GE.96-16054 (E)

1. The present Government came into office on 17 November 1993. A well-organized census exercise was carried out in all the 30 states of Nigeria as well as the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, in 1991.

2. The census provisional figures are as listed below:

State	Males	Females	Total
Lagos	2 999 526	2 686 253	6 685 781
Kano	2 858 724	2 773 316	5 632 040
Sokoto	2 188 111	2 234 280	4 392 391
Bauchi	2 202 962	2 091 451	4 294 413
Rivers	2 079 583	1 904 274	3 983 857
Kaduna	2 059 382	1 909 870	3 969 252
Ondo	1 958 928	1 925 557	3 884 485
Katsina	1 944 218	1 934 126	3 878 344
Oyo	1 745 720	1 743 069	3 488 789
Plateau	1 645 730	1 633 974	3 282 704
Enugu	1 482 245	1 679 050	3 161 295
Jigawa	1 419 726	1 410 203	2 829 929
Benue	1 385 402	1 394 996	2 380 398
Anambra	1 374 801	1 393 102	2 767 903
Borno	1 327 311	1 269 278	2 596 589
Delta	1 273 208	1 296 973	2 570 181
Imo	1 178 031	1 307 468	2 482 367
Niger	1 290 720	1 191 647	2 482 367
Akwa Ibom	1 162 430	1 197 306	2 359 736
Ogun	1 144 907	1 193 663	2 338 570
Abia	1 108 357	1 189 621	2 297 978
Osun	1 079 424	1 123 592	2 203 016
Edo	1 082 718	1 077 130	2 159 848
Adamawa	1 884 824	1 039 225	2 124 049
Kogi	1 055 964	1 043 082	2 099 046
Kebbi	1 024 334	1 037 892	2 062 226
Cross River	1 945 270	920 224	1 865 604
Kwara	790 921	775 548	1 566 469
Taraba	754 754	725 836	1 480 590
Yobe	719 763	691 718	1 411 481
Abuja F.C.T.	208 535	172 136	378 671
Total	44 544 531	43 969 970	88 514 501

3. Further information on the country's population, which is available and provided below, shows the different regions, States and local government authorities

Region	State	Local government areas	1991
Northern Region	Nigeria	593	88 514
	Bauchi	23	4 294
	Borno	21	2 597
	Yobe	13	1 411
	Adamawa	16	2 124
	Taraba	12	1 481
	Niger	19	2 482
	Sokoto	29	4 392
	Kebbi	16	2 062
	Kwara	12	1 566
	Kogi	16	2 099
	Benue	18	2 780
	Plateau	23	3 284
	Kano	34	5 632
	Jigawa	22	2 830
	Kaduna	18	3 969
	Katsina	25	3 878
Eastern Region	Anambra	16	2 768
	Enugu	19	3 161
	Imo	21	2 485
	Abia	17	2 294
	C. River	14	1 866
	Akwa	24	2 360
	Rivers	24	2 984
Western Region	Ikeja		
	Oyo	25	3 489
	Osun	23	2 203
	Ondo	26	3 884
	Ogun	15	2 339
Mid-Western Region	Edo	14	2 160
	Delta	19	2 570
Lagos	Lagos	15	5 586
	FCT	4	379
Regions and Lagos	30 States and FCT	593	30 States
	FCT	LGAS	and FCT

4. The rights set out in the Covenant include:

(a) The right to work (arts. 6 and 7);

(b) The right to social security (art. 9);

(c) The right to protection of the family (art. 10);

(d) The right to an adequate standard of living (art. 11);

(e) The right to education (art. 13);

(f) The right to health (art. 12);

(g) The right to join trade unions (art. 8).

These provisions have created new standards and obligations which States parties to the Covenant are required to conform to.

The right to work and to join trade unions

5. Following the ratification of the Covenant in 1993, Nigeria has intensified efforts, resources, strategies and action plans geared towards the implementation of this body of rights. The Labour Act of 1990 constitutes the fundamental statute by which the rights and privileges of workers and the appertaining terms and conditions of employment have been specified and enshrined in the Constitution of the land, thereby giving such rights, privileges, terms and conditions necessary empowerment under the law. For instance, the Minimum Wage Act guarantees minimum enforceable levels of remuneration payable to any employee, as well as defines such other employment conditions as hours of work, annual holidays, sick leave and rates of allowances as applicable. In so doing, this Act has not only checked the odium of arbitrariness and excesses on the part of employers but has equally protected the employee from undue exploitation.

The rights of women

6. Deriving from the umbrella of rights under the Labour Act are the rights of women. By stipulating and guaranteeing the rights of each individual to work and the equality of pay without gender discrimination, the Labour Act has brought liberation to the Nigerian woman in the workplace. This development constituted a fundamental departure from the old practices laden with prejudices. Today women in Nigeria can expect to receive equality as of right in terms of remunerations, leave grants and tax rebates, not to mention the official recognition accorded the importance of maternal well-being through such entitlements as maternity leave with full pay, as well as shorter working periods for nursing mothers. Of perhaps equal significance is the non-selectivity of these amenities which apply unconditionally to all women, regardless of their marital status. Following from the above, and sustaining its momentum for the protection of the rights of women, the Act proceeds to prohibit the employment of women under hostile conditions. Consequently, it has become unlawful to either employ women on night duty (with the exception

of nurses and women holding responsible positions of management) or in underground work in mines (except those who may as part of their training be required to enter mines in the course of their studies).

The rights of young persons and the disabled

7. The Act is unequivocal and decisive in its protection of children and the disabled who may either be innocent, vulnerable or dependent. For instance, Government reserves, by legislation, a certain proportion of the labour force in its establishment for the disabled. Correspondingly, the Act and the Young Persons Act of 1958 guarantee protection of young persons from exploitation and stipulates accordingly the conditions under which a young person may or may not be employed. It definitely prohibits for instance, the employment of young persons in any capacity outside the family. Even so, the Act provides a stringent and rigorous check-list or catalogue of conditions regarding the nature and environment of such work (no night work, no work on public holidays, no machine work, no work as a trimmer or stoker, no work aboard ships; employment restricted to a place where it is reasonably possible to return each day to the place of residence of parent or guardian, etc.). For the purposes of monitoring and control or audit and accountability, the Act further stipulates that it is mandatory for all employers of young persons in an industrial undertaking to keep a register of all young persons in their employ, with personal and official particulars (age, date of employment, conditions and nature of employment, etc.). Finally, the Act rejects forced labour, and wholly and entirely prohibits the practice. Although there are no comparative figures and statistics or parameters against which the declining trend of the phenomenon of child abuse through forced labour may be scientifically or empirically evaluated, there is a consensus among sociologists and social/welfare workers that the set of rights under reference may have already saved the future or even the lives of a significantly rising population through present and future generations.

The rights of workers

8. The centre-piece of the Act, the overriding principle of its enactment, is the protection of Nigerian workers as a whole. Therefore, all provisions pertaining to the Act are geared towards improving the conditions of employment as a means of mobilizing the well-being of the Nigerian worker. Thus, there is an adequate complement of clauses providing for the safety and healthy working conditions of employees.

9. Furthermore, the legislation guarantees the right of employees to join associations within their economic group, and in so doing recognizes the principle of "guided democracy", which principle, provided it is carried out within the ambit of the law, allows for the rights of associations to declare trade disputes and/or embark on strikes in defence of the rights of workers.

10. At its best, this Bill of Rights constitutes goals whose attainment embodies the spirit of the Act. So far, the Act has been as revolutionary as it has been transformational to the life of the Nigerian worker and the emergence of organized labour as the backbone of economic development and social well-being. The evolution may indeed be tardy but Nigeria is

positively striding towards a decent realization of this body of rights, in spite of the constraints of the severe economic turbulence and the attendant instability in the political environment.

Health

11. In spite of everything said and done, Nigeria remains preponderantly an agrarian society, with over 80 per cent of aggregate population base rural dwellers. Thus, health experts and policy makers had realized early enough that an authentic health policy for Nigeria must be one that addresses health care delivery needs at the grass-roots levels.

12. From a policy perspective, health care delivery has benefited immensely from the three-tier government structure which Nigeria operates. At the primary level of health care organization, the existence of LGAs (Local Government Areas) corresponding to the World Health Organization's definition of "districts" has provided the perfect vehicle for accelerated mobilization and action. By enshrining within the Constitution the statutory responsibilities of the LGAs towards the promotion and operation of primary health care (PHC) schemes, LGAs automatically become nodes and cells for comprehensive national health care mobilization. The argument is well tested once it is appreciated that no less than 593 LGAs are networked in a national grid designed to cater for the needs of some 16.1 million people for a full and comprehensive coverage. Conceptually, it is difficult to imagine a superior organizational framework. Each LGA enjoys a decent measure of limited autonomy as provided in the Constitution, which autonomy confers upon it the liberty to plan and execute health projects considered essential for the advancement of the well-being of people in its area of jurisdiction, albeit consistent with the statutory financial allocations received from the centre. And by placing health care delivery in the concurrent legislative list, the 1979 Constitution has left no one in doubt about the intention to provide the greatest number the maximum good that is accruable from carefully dovetailed policy measures, running the entire gamut of governance, from primary to the tertiary levels of government.

13. After considerable brainstorming debates and deliberations, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) was established in 1992 with the aim and purpose of ensuring sustainability of primary health care nationwide. The fundamental goals and objectives of the national primary health care scheme are as follows:

(a) Reducing the infant mortality rate through the minimization of occurrence of childhood diseases in general, and commensurate reduction in the levels of morbidity and complications due to the occurrence of diseases in children;

(b) Promoting safe motherhood through the improvement and expansion of existing material and child health care facilities and services; development and/or adoption of technologies aimed at the protection of the health of mothers and children;

(c) Ensuring a rising trend of increase in productive life years, and conversely a reduction in the incidence and prevalence of disability; providing adequately for the rehabilitation of the disabled, thereby increasing their productive life years also;

(d) Providing an ever-widening sphere of basic immunization coverage so as to achieve the following sub-objectives and goals:

(i) As part of the global long-term programme for the eradication of measles, reduction of measles deaths by 95 per cent (compared with pre-immunization levels);

(ii) Achieve a cumulative immunization coverage level of 80 per cent against diseases such as diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis;

(iii) Achieve and sustain an aggregate immunization coverage level of 90 per cent against measles for "under-ones", and tetanus toxiod for women of child-bearing age;

(iv) Successful incorporation of yellow fever and hepatitis B vaccines into the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) scheme;

(e) Stimulating, sustaining and coordinating the realization through the phenomenon of Essential Drugs Coverage and promotion of the Bamako Initiative, of the goal of ensuring that quality essential drugs are available and accessible in all LGA health facilities at affordable prices, and to generally improve the quality and accessibility of primary health care services;

(f) Sponsoring adult health literacy by organizing such educational platforms as will ensure, amongst others, that all adults are aware of the prevailing health problems in their localities and that all adults are made aware of and encouraged to utilize the available health services in their environments.

(g) Promoting the Household Food Security Programme, under which information is freely disseminated regarding household food security in Nigeria. Under the prevailing regime, there is a dearth of information on household food security such that in 1986, some 18 per cent of Nigeria's households were estimated to suffer food insecurity. Between then and 1994, it is further estimated, rather regrettably, that the rate of household food security has dropped from 82 per cent to 64 per cent;

(h) Instituting and developing progressive water supply and sanitation schemes designed to ensure increased availability of potable water supplies and adequate disposal of solid and human wastes in rural and urban communities with the vision of reducing the incidence of endemic water-related diseases;

(i) Combating pro-actively the scourge of the HIV/AIDS menace. In this regard, it is to be pointed out that by April 1994, Nigeria (with a population of 88.5 million people - 1991 census) had recorded a cumulative 1,128 reported

cases of AIDS. Routine serological screening and surveys since 1992 indicate a rising trend in the epidemic within Nigeria. Current prevention and control interventions place a high premium on activities that have a positive influence on people's behaviour at the community level. Hence, the prevailing focus on the creation of public awareness not only of AIDS, but also of other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The public enlightenment programmes are supplemented with other complementary efforts such as:

(i) Establishing condom supply systems/centres, and promoting the use of same for prevention of STD and HIV infections;

(ii) Establishing and promoting STD care-seeking behaviour particularly at the grass-roots levels;

(j) Instituting emergency preparedness and response (EPR) as a nationwide strategic action plan. The plan seeks to devise and place adequate contingency plans to mitigate the effects of disasters/emergencies, and minimize the impact of disasters on public health by incorporating safety-enhancing standards and measures designed to save lives and protect property;

(k) Sponsoring and promoting health education. This strategy is complementary to measures under the Adult Health Literacy Programme and reinforces their gains and strengths. The literacy rate in Nigeria is a deplorable 52 per cent, and there are obvious indications that health knowledge and practices cannot be, and are not, at desired levels. Cheerfully, some significant efforts are already in existence in terms of redressing the situation through the provision of health education services covering the diverse disciplines of primary health care. Regrettably, emphasis and pressure have been more on rhetoric, augmented with the distribution of pamphlets whose circulation is usually restricted to the environs of health facilities. However, it is to be remembered at all times that the role of health education is central to primary health care delivery for the following reasons:

(i) To create full awareness of the prevailing health problems and available health care services in their localities;

(ii) To understand the causes of the prevailing health conditions and how to prevent and control them.

Providing the infrastructure

14. Apart from the institutional and legislative provisions which the Constitution has guaranteed, Government has also made mandatory the development of essential physical infrastructure to enable the implementation of the basic health care scheme. For instance, basic to the scheme is the building in each local government area of:

(a) A comprehensive health centre that would serve as the headquarters and coordinating centre of primary health care programmes, activities and services at the grass-roots level;

(b) Four primary health centres and 20 health clinics that would function as delivery points, under the scheme, to the constituent communities.

15. Further, to provide the health manpower stream required to drive and sustain the scheme, government policy has provided for the establishment in each State of a health technology school. It is the responsibility of these schools to train and develop the three categories of health workers envisaged, namely, supervisors, assistants and aides.

Health financing

16. It has already been pointed out that based on the instrument of statutory financial regulation, primary funding for the scheme is provided by the Federal Government through its annual budgets. Supplementary funding is supplied by State Governments since health care delivery is thankfully on the concurrent legislative list.

17. Although the strategy for health care delivery envisages free availability of services ("free of charge") to the people, owing to the phenomenon of under-funding arising from the inadequate supply of budgeted funds or shortages of other financial resources, the scheme has suffered from poor implementation, especially in the rural areas. The following symptomatic manifestations of funding constraints are discernible:

(a) Under-provision of drugs;

(b) Lack of repair and replacement of equipment and vehicles;

(c) Dilapidated infrastructures;

(d) Fall in real salary levels, leading to the exodus of qualified professional staff;

(e) Inadequate staff, particularly in the remote rural areas;

(f) Lack of a functional information system.

18. The natural outcome of this undesirable state of affairs is that consumers of health care have been forced to turn to and use non-governmental and private health facilities, where they are required to pay inordinately high fees.

19. It is, however, to be pointed out that the problem of resource deficiency for primary health care delivery is an aftermath of the national economic crisis and the implementation of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) designed to resolve it, but which has concurrently had an adverse and exacerbating effect on the social sectors. This unfortunate situation, however, is unlikely to ease or reverse in the near future.

20. Because the primary health care programme, which is the main thrust of the national health policy, requires additional resources to succeed under the prevailing dispensation, this has led to the canvassing of a proposal for the institution of a national health insurance scheme for every worker.

Furthermore, the Labour Act has articulated the provision of medical attention to every staff and family of workers, quite apart from the stipulations for a safe working environment.

21. Finally, Government's policy on health is well captured and encapsulated in the slogan "Health for all by the year 2000". Whether this objective is attainable or not remains to be seen. But Nigeria has adopted a positive strategy for its implementation based on the primary health care systems, which it pursues relentlessly in collaboration with UNICEF and other agencies of the United Nations. The expectations are high.

Education

22. Background and overview. The population, which is approximately 100 million people, is growing at an estimated rate of 3.5 per cent annually. Nigeria's literacy rate is currently reckoned at 42 per cent. As an instrument for mobilizing social and economic change, education has occupied the sustained focus and attention of policy makers since before the attainment of independence. The desire to achieve the goal of universalizing education has recorded some memorable milestones throughout the historical development of Nigeria. For example, 1995 was the year in which the old western region launched its landmark programme of universal free education.

23. Because of its transformative role as a facilitator of rapid developments in national advancement, education in Nigeria has been accorded top priority under the development programmes of successive Governments since the colonial era. The pre-eminence accorded education within the scope of national strategic planning frameworks over time is amply illustrated by the nature and calibre of the following past programmes: "The Ten-Year Education Development Plan (1946-1955)"; "The 1948 Education Ordinance"; and "The National Policy on Education of 1981". All of the programmes shared a common philosophy, namely, she recognition of education as the "instrument par excellence" of the socio-economic, political and technological advancement of the country and the empowerment of the individual. Having ratified the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, Nigeria is bound to the commitment to reach the Education for All target by the year 2000 (or thereafter). Furthermore, Nigeria has made additional similar commitments through the endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Survival, Development and Education of Children and the ratification of the OAU Declaration on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child. These commitments to meet the basic learning needs of all by the end of the decade were reaffirmed in 1993, at New Delhi, at the Summit of heads of Government of the nine high-population countries.

Problem identification and profile of challenges

24. Expectedly, as in many laudable schemes of equivalent character and dimension, implementation has been hamstrung by a variety of institutional, economic and socio-cultural bottlenecks; thus, the major challenges of Education for All in Nigeria have been identified and grouped under four main subject headings as follows:

(a) Infrastructural capacity. This challenge involves the twin-pronged strategy of increasing access to primary schools for children of school age, and correspondingly reducing the drop-out rates from enrolment registers. It therefore entails the expansion of existing primary schools, and the creation/development of new institutions in order to increase the aggregate retention power of schools;

(b) Gender disparity. It is an empirical fact, long since identified and verified, that female enrolment in education is significantly less than the equivalent male benchmarks. And to further potentiate this problem, it has been equally established that in most States, girls are more susceptible to withdrawal from educational programmes before achieving an enduring and satisfactory level of literacy. All of which has led to the inevitable conclusion that the barriers to girl-child education in Nigeria need to be pro-actively engaged, and tackled positively and aggressively;

(c) Quality and relevance. There is a need to ensure that beneficiaries of a complete primary education cycle achieve mastery of and proficiency in essential learning and life skills to justify the exertion and expenditure within the total endeavour. Quality is affected by such actors as the school curriculum, and the availability of key resource inputs such as teaching manpower, teaching aids and instructional materials. Under the prevailing economic downturn in Nigeria, the attenuation of national resources poses a critical handicap to the provision of this basket of requirements;

(d) Funding and management. The problem of funding has been for Nigeria the biggest challenge to the realization of the Education for All objective. Some of the facilitating strategic positions and actions adopted in order to address and/or resolve the issues mitigating the attainment of the declared EFA objective are outlined in the following paragraphs;

Strategies adopted for implementation

25. A network of strategies has been articulated, which strategies fall into the following broad categories:

(a) The institutional framework. The following institutions have been established to cater for the various categories of target groups for basic education:

(i) The National Primary Education Commission (NPED) was re-established in 1993 to take care of the funding and management of primary education. Corresponding structures like the State Primary Education Board (SPEB) were also established at State, local government, district and village levels, to ensure grass-roots mobilization and participation in the management of primary education;

(ii) The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education was established in 1990 and charged with the responsibility of promoting literacy and adult education;

(iii) Other existing institutions (in existence before 1990) include the National Commission for Nomadic Education established in 1989 and the Women Education Branch in the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) created in 1989 to promote women and girl-child education;

(b) The non-institutional framework. This strategic thrust encompasses a gamut of action plans (material and non-material) involving enrolment drives, mass literacy campaigns, encouragement of the participation of communities, voluntary agencies, NGOs, private and corporate bodies in funding basic education and the establishment of private pre-primary and primary institutions. The resultant effect of the implementation of this strategic option has been a significantly increased access to pre-primary and primary education.

(c) Improvement of the learning environment. The process of improvement of the learning environment through the provision of necessary infrastructure as well as learning and teaching materials has been at all times a priority consideration for Government. Under this initiative, State Governments have built new schools and libraries and rehabilitated the existing primary schools. On a new and innovative platform the primary education project co-sponsored by the Federal Government and the World Bank in 1992 is designed to revitalize and upgrade education nation-wide through the provision of instructional materials including textbooks, supply of equipment, training of personnel, and effective monitoring and evaluation of the primary system. On the whole, under this programme, 11 million books have been printed and distributed to over 33,000 primary schools in the country;

(d) Improvement of management and funding. There has been a consistently improved budgetary allocation to the education sector over the recent years in the annual budgets at both the Federal and State Government levels. To reinforce the healthy development, Government has established an Education Bank and instituted an Education Tax Fund, in order to improve the resource base for basic education and community participation;

(e) Curriculum review. Learning from the pitfalls of the past and building upon the associated experience, a review programme has been installed and operationalized such that primary schools and adult education curricula are reviewed and revised periodically to ensure relevance and suitability. In the spirit of the review system, the Women Education Curriculum is under particular review, and correspondingly there is also a plan to review the primary school curriculum with a view to making it female-friendly;

(f) Capacity building. Continuous training of teachers for primary school has been intensified in order to ensure that those who manage and implement basic education projects are sufficient in number and capable;

(g) Collaboration with international organizations. The Federal Ministry of Education is collaborating with some of the United Nations agencies in the implementation of the basic education project. These include the FGN/UNICEF programme on cooperation in basic education; the World Bank Primary Education Project (1994-1996); the UNESCO/UNICEF Learning Achievement Project in Nigeria; and the FGN/UNDP Mass Literacy Programme. Also, the

United Nations Overseas Development Administration has indicated interest and willingness to assist Nigeria in the areas of primary, adult and nomadic education;

(h) Appropriate legislation. In addition to establishing institutional frameworks, Government has given legal force to new policies and initiatives through enacting various legislation, including the following:

(i) The enabling decree that transferred the management of primary education to local Governments has been repealed. In its place, decree 96 of 1993 has given the National Primary Education Commission the authority to manage primary education;

(ii) Decree No. 31 of 1993 established the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria;

(iii) Decree No. 30 of 1993 has categorized teaching as an essential service;

(iv) The National Board for Educational Measurement has also been established;

(v) Decree No. 9 of 1993, Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Amendment Decree prescribes conditions and guidelines for establishing educational institutions;

(vi) The institution of an education tax makes it compulsory for all companies employing more than 200 persons to pay 2 per cent of their pre-tax to an Education Fund;

(vii) The establishment of the Education Bank which enables students to obtain self loans to finance their education.

Furthermore, the Federal Government has encouraged State Governments to enact laws against early withdrawal of the girl child from school for reasons attributable to early marriage.

Conclusion

26. On the whole, enrolment for pre-primary education, a sector which had hitherto not received adequate attention - has greatly improved. The gross enrolment in primary schools has already exceeded the 84 per cent target set for 1995, this being the cumulative outcome of intensive government efforts (geared towards a rising enrolment) instituted since 1990. There has equally been a corresponding increase in the number of existing schools from 35,433 in 1990 to 38,254 in 1993. The enrolment of girls in primary education has remarkably improved since 1990, as national, State and community advocacy efforts succeeded in attracting more girls into schools.

27. In the same vein, access to education has been extended to the nomads. Available statistics show that about 47,000 children of nomads now have access to education. Concurrently, attention is equally being paid to the education needs of children of migrant fishermen and children in especially difficult circumstances, like street children. Elsewhere, efforts have been made to infuse elements of basic education into the curriculum of Koranic schools, to ensure that the large numbers of children attending Koranic schools also acquire a basic western education. The issue of gender disparity has been greatly reduced. This is partly due to the fact that the Federal Government established two secondary schools in each of the 30 States of the Federation, one exclusively for girls and the other a mixed one.

The right to protection of family

28. Chapter 11, section 4 (2) (b), of the 1979 Constitution; the security and welfare of the people as the primary purpose of government. The right to protection of family has been recognized in Nigeria and it is manifest through the launching of the Family Support Programme (FSP) by the wife of the head of State, which is aimed at the support and protection of the family as an entity as the first recourse of the individual. The Constitution also guarantees right to privacy of citizens, their homes, correspondence, telephone conversations and telegraphic communications.

29. In realizing the importance of the family and the special role of women in sustaining a stable home, a special Ministry has been created for Women's Affairs. This Ministry is now charged with the responsibility of coordinating the welfare of children, women in particular, and the family as a whole.

30. The FSP was introduced to improve and sustain good living conditions for Nigerian families both in the rural and urban areas. FSP has successfully sensitized and mobilized women and, in fact, the entire populace on the aims and objectives of the programme.

31. The Family Support Programme (FSP). The FSP has tried to address the issue of the role of children and women in the family, where children and women have the right to contribute meaningfully to the development of the individual components of the family. The family is therefore to be seen as a unit consisting of the father, mother and the children, and if the family is seen that way, everybody in effect has the right to membership and freedom. Wives and women are not to be seen as second-class citizens.

32. Children. The importance of children in a family is to be emphasized as they are the leaders of tomorrow and this requires political action at the highest level. The Young Persons Act of 1958 addressed the issue of welfare of children but did not address the issue of child abuse by parents, beating of children and sending them to the streets to beg and trade, the issue of child slavery, which occurs because of economic hardship, and the issue of coercing children into marriages. New legislation is to be put in place to take care of those, and alleviate the suffering of children in order to promote the full development of their human potentials.

33. Women. Women in their various roles play a critical role in the well-being of children. The enhancement of the status of women and their equal access to education, training, credit and other extensive services constitute a valuable contribution to a nation's social and economic development.

34. Prior to the launching of the FSP, another programme was in place specifically geared towards the emancipation of the rural women in particular, and women in general. The programme was equally geared towards the realization of rural women's economic objectives and a better standard of living. These programmes, though laudable, have not been effectively carried out due to limited resources and cultural practices in certain parts of the country.

35. On the whole, Nigeria has been implementing these rights despite the current severe economic turbulence being experienced.

36. The economic situation of the vast majority of the population has deteriorated considerably and inflation has increased immensely; so the implementation of these rights are subjected to the economic situation of the country.